Patricia Pickard. *The Davis Sisters: Their Influences and Their Impact* (Bangor, ME: Patricia P. Pickard, 2009).

In the summer of 1925, twin sisters from Georgia, Carro Davis (1884-1976) and Susie Davis (1884-1962), arrived in Saint John, New Brunswick to conduct a series of Pentecostal meetings. These women had already left their mark in ministry as they had helped to found Pentecostal churches in Bangor, Maine in 1923 and in Fredericton, New Brunswick in 1924. The account of the Saint John meetings was short and dramatic: "on Labour Day 1925, the Pentecostal fire fell" (88). After that historic event, the Davis sisters remained in that city where they enjoyed nearly four decades of successful ministry as co-pastors of the independent Full Gospel Church of Saint John.

In 2009, the Davises found a sympathetic scribe to record their story. In *The Davis Sisters: Their Influences and Their Impact*, Patricia Pickard claims not to offer any interpretation of the sisters' lives, but only to compile their story. In a conscious attempt not to distort the record, the author turns her attention to marshalling the facts and building her account from the perspective of others who, like Pickard herself, knew the Davis sisters personally. The result is a well-documented compilation of sources about two characters central to the history of Pentecostalism in Atlantic Canada. Clearly, Pickard's purpose was different from that of a professional historian because academic biographers are usually quite deliberate in their efforts to address larger questions. Defending her decision not to do so, Pickard claimed that she wanted "only to tell

the story in layman's terms" (ii). That popular approach is the real strength of this work.

Despite Pickard's declared intent not to impose her own views on the reader, she has great admiration for the Davis sisters, declaring, for example, that "any work that has been done or is yet to be done on the Davis sisters cannot be anything except uplifting and in tribute" (Acknowledgements). Even with such unqualified praise, Pickard included some less-than-flattering accounts of the Davises, primarily from ministry associates. Details about how Carro and Susie Davis organized their private lives reveal less positive aspects of their personalities including their attitudes toward other women, their parishioners, and their hired help (113-117).

By reproducing the primary source accounts so carefully, Pickard offers some tantalizing observations. For example, she reports that the Davis sisters' hometown of Macon, Georgia, "boasted several 'spunky' women who left a good mark on society and the world in general" (viii). Such a claim begs for further exploration. Were the Davis twins shaped by their Georgian upbringing and their class privilege? Did their "spunk" exhibit the typical "new woman" and challenge the prescribed gender roles of their day? While the Davis sisters ventured out to become the founders of a congregation in New Brunswick (something that clearly was a breach of the gender norms they would have acquired through their upper-class Presbyterian upbringing in the American south), it would be false to conclude that the Davis sisters defied all convention.

While they welcomed innovation and adventure on a personal level, it seems that the Davises also held to some rather conservative views about women. Even within the Pentecostal movement, which welcomed women into leadership, often more than mainline churches, the sisters apparently did not aspire either to advance the cause of women generally or themselves specifically. They were, according to one source, "'harder on women' [than men] almost to the point of being ridiculous" (113). One might read such judgmental authoritarianism as a way to exert their personal control over people within their congregation. However, when it came to public acts of worship and ceremony, the Davis sisters did not insist upon strong ecclesial authority. They never, for example, performed weddings or baptisms, and given the independent nature of their church, they were in no way prevented from doing so.

Areas for further research might include the Davis sisters' theological position and their personal networks. While Pickard offers some intriguing insights into these matters, it is important to contextualize these anecdotes. One of their former associates recalled, for example, that "Even though the Davis Sisters were 'Oneness,' most of their special speakers were Trinitarians," and that guests were more likely to be preachers from the American Assemblies of God preachers than the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada or the United Pentecostal Church, a group the Davises dismissed as having "a harshness about them" (112). The networks of these early Atlantic Pentecostal

leaders beg for further exploration within the broader developments that were unfolding as cross-border exchanges between Canada and the United States continued to dominate Pentecostalism in the first half of the twentieth century. The Davis sisters might provide a case study for the relationship between Canadian and American Pentecostals and thereby help to reconsider the adaptations and evolution of the movement.

Pickard makes an important contribution and scholars of Canadian Pentecostalism owe her a debt of gratitude. She has done the difficult work of locating primary sources and marshalling them into a chronological and topical narrative of the Davis sisters' lives. She clearly indicates when she switches to a new informant, and she carefully references each source in a series of thorough notes. Pickard provides precisely the kind of well-documented primary source material that Canadian Pentecostal scholars require to continue their work. For this reason, cooperation between professional scholars and careful lay researchers like Patricia Pickard holds great promise.

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